

**Town of Brentwood
Budget Committee**
Minutes of January 11, 2016

Meeting: Regular Budget committee meeting held at the Brentwood Town Office

Present: Krista Steger, Chairperson, Melissa Hanlon, Keith Levitsky, Bill Faria, Malcolm Allison, Jeff Bryan, Elyse Gallo, Amy Mitchell

Visitors: Melissa Litchfield, Lisa Swasey, Scott Dennehy, Kim Woods, Jane Duarte, Amy Ransom, Sandie Macdonald, Kathy Demarais, Sue Mitchell, Lisa Brown, Rebecca Dunham, Jessie Hollister, Ron Kew, Tina Dennehy, Joshua Bertoulin, Bridget Zacher, Amy Brown, Kristen Chiumiento, Doug Cowie, Fred DeBaets, Katie Wilson, Amy Wilson, Nicole Sprague, Allison Higgins, Chad Goodrich, Mike Morgan, Liz Faria, Eric Turer, Valerie Rogers.

Chairperson Krista Steger called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2015 Minutes: There were no changes from the draft. Motion to approve the minutes Elyse/Jeff carried 8-0.

Selectman's Update

Jeff advised that the selectman reopened several department budgets and revised them. Krista advised that those budgets and the town warrant articles will be available for Budcomm action at the next Budcomm meeting, which is January 18, 2016.

Swasey School Budget

Amy presented the Swasey School budget in binder form and noted that the operating budget would have been relatively flat except the budget this year includes full day kindergarten which adds \$257,579 and makes it 4.95% higher than the approved 2015-2016 budget. The increase adds \$0.46 per thousand valuation to the current tax rate including the addition of two teachers and two aides for full day kindergarten. Amy walked the Budcomm members through various pages of the binder which showed the line item increases and decreases and answered questions. Amy stated that without the full day kindergarten, the number of teachers would have been 15 due to reduced enrollment. 17 teachers are planned with full day kindergarten. The total budget approved by the School Board is \$5,460,975. She explained several of the increases including new phone system and wiring, insurance increase, retirement increase, and additional money for security improvements to the building. Details of specific security measures were not discussed due to concerns of publically revealing current security defects and future improvements. Security and surveillance improvements are based on homeland security suggestions. Bill pointed out that, in his opinion, it is extremely, difficult if not impossible, to improve security with just surveillance. Elyse suggested an armed guard on the premises could be a more cost effective solution compared to extensive video surveillance. Discussion of the budget line items and questions to Ron Kew and others followed.

The binder contained line by line increases and decreases, and a written explanation of the rational or reason for each one. Members commented that the budget binder made the budget transparent and is one of best the Budcomm has received from the School Board.

Elyse pointed out that while the budget is a good budget and one that she would be able to support except that she and the town voters have no opportunity to determine whether or not he or she is in favor of or opposes full day kindergarten. Her opinion is that the school operating budget should be separate from the full day kindergarten budget to lock in the operating budget since full day kindergarten did not pass in other years rather than risk the operating budget. She believes the budget associated with full day kindergarten should be a separate warrant article. Amy responded that the school board feels strongly that full day kindergarten is needed and that amendments could be made if the voters don't want it. Extensive discussion followed.

Correspondence

Krista received 2 E mails on her Town e-mail; they dealt with the School budget. One from Michelle Siudut asking the Budcomm to keep in mind that prior town votes for all day kindergarten were defeated before making a recommendation to the town, and one from Becky Dunham asking the budget committee to consider making the all-day kindergarten decision a warrant article rather than keeping it in the school operating budget. Discussion followed.

School Budget Voting

Motion to approve the School Budget \$5,059,998 Jeff/Bill, carried 6-2. After some confusion about the exact amount, the budget was reopened Melissa/Keith, carried 8-0. Discussion of the budget numbers followed.

Motion to approve the School Board recommended 2016-2017 budget of \$5,460,975 Jeff/Bill carried 6-2.

Warrant Articles

Krista advised that there would be a warrant article to reduce the number of members of the Municipal Budget committee by one to leave an odd number which would help avoid tie voting. The number of members, if it passes, would be seven. The reduction would become affective in the 2017-2018 budget period. Melissa will check to see if a 2/3 vote or a simple majority is needed. Motion to approve the Budcomm warrant article: Melissa/Keith carried 8-0.

Amy stated that the school Board is proposing a \$20K expendable trust warrant article to improve security. Possible acquisition of security cameras and adding a vestibule to the building were cited as uses for the money. Discussion and questions followed. Motion to approve Jeff/Elyse carried 8-0. Krista asked the School Board to write up the warrant language for next meeting.

Town Warrant articles will be acted upon next week.

Other Business

Next meeting will be on January 18, 2016.

Visitor Comment

Questions were asked about the time of the Public Hearing on Feb 8, whether or not it is 7:00pm or 7:30pm...either way it will be ½ hour after the Budcomm Meeting.

Motion to adjourn 8:11 pm Jeff/Keith, carried 8-0.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Malcolm Allison